

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

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GENERAL NOTES.

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NOTES ON *CEMOPHORA COCCINEA* (BLUMENBACH) IN MARYLAND AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA VICINITY.

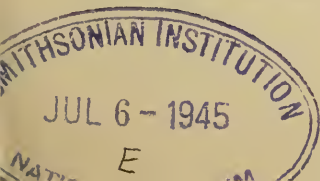
Stejneger (1905, Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash. 18: 73) added the Scarlet Snake, *Cemophora coccinea* (Blumenbach) to the list of snakes known to occur in the District of Columbia. The basis for this addition was a specimen in the United States National Museum (No. 35308) collected in 1893 in the vicinity of Anacostia. Previously, in 1862, Prof. A. Wyatt collected this snake from Baltimore, Maryland. This specimen is now No. 750 in the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard College. This was apparently the initial Maryland record for this snake. Another early Maryland record for this species was collected at St. Margarets, Anne Arundel Co., in 1891. Cope (1900, Ann. Rept. U. S. Nat. Mus. 1898, p. 930) mentions this specimen which was sent alive to the Museum but which later escaped.

The present paper lists the subsequent records for *C. coccinea* from Maryland and the District of Columbia vicinity, together with comments on its distribution. These notes were prompted by the recent discovery of another Scarlet Snake in the local region. This new specimen was made available to the writer through the efforts and cooperation of Mr. D. W. Willingmyre and Dr. Martin H. Muma. These subsequent records are as follows:

MARYLAND:

Wicomico Co., Salisbury; collected by J. P. Brown, April 5, 1923 (Univ. of Md. No. 1).

Prince Georges Co., Brandywine (McCauley, 1940, unpublished PhD. thesis, Cornell Univ.—on the basis of a photograph in the possession of C. S. East).



This snake has also been reported from Severn, Anne Arundel Co., and St. Denis, Baltimore Co., by Kelley, Davis, and Robertson (1936, *Snakes of Maryland*, p. 68).

#### VIRGINIA:

Fairfax Co., Mt. Vernon (Dunn, 1936, *List of Virginia Amphibians and Reptiles*, Haverford, Pa., mimeographed, p. 5). This specimen is now in the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology (No. 56260).

The recently discovered specimen, which prompted this report, was collected in the basement of a house at Lanham, Prince Georges Co., Maryland, on September 13, 1944. It measured 14 inches in length, while the average for this species is 16 inches (Conant and Bridges, 1939. *What Snake Is That?*, p. 85).

Thus from the time that the initial specimen of *C. coccinea* was collected from Maryland in 1862 to the present, this snake has only been recorded on nine different occasions. The apparent scarcity of this species is probably correlated both with its secretive habits and with its greater abundance in the more southern parts of its range. In this latter connection it is of interest to note that the specimens mentioned by Stejneger (loc. cit.) from the District of Columbia and Maryland were at that time the most northern records for this essentially southern snake. Since that time, however, the range of this snake has been extended to New Jersey (Kauffeld, 1935, *Copeia*, No. 4, p. 191). The present distribution, as given by Stejneger and Barbour (1943, *Check List of North American Amphibians and Reptiles*, 5th Ed., p. 152), is thus from southern New Jersey to Alabama, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Florida.

So far as the distribution of *C. coccinea* in the New Jersey, Maryland, and District of Columbia portion of its range is concerned, all of the localities are, with one exception, in the Coastal Plain. The single exception is the specimen collected from Baltimore in 1862 for which there is not sufficient data to determine its exact physiographic affinity. In Virginia, on the other hand, although most of the material is also from the Coastal Plain, there are a few records for the occurrence of this snake in the Piedmont Plateau, and one record from west of the Blue Ridge in the Valley and Ridge Province.

The apparent limitation of *C. coccinea* to the Coastal Plain in New Jersey, Maryland, and the District of Columbia, as compared with its more widespread occurrence in Virginia and other parts of its range, is of considerable interest. This type of distribution is thus shown by other southern species of both amphibians and reptiles which, as they extend their ranges northward, tend to become associated with the Coastal Plain. Moreover, such species usually occur no farther north than either Maryland or New Jersey in the eastern United States. Some of these species, and the State in which they reach their northernmost distribution, are as follows: *Gastrophryne carolinensis* (Md.), *Cnemidophorus sexlineatus* (Md.), *Leiopisma unicolor* (N. J.), *Elaphe guttata* (N. J.), *Pituophis m. melanoleucus* (Rockland Co., N. Y.), and *Lampropeltis g. getulus* (N. J.).

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